



BLACK PHYSICIANS OF CANADA
MÉDECINS NOIRS DU CANADA

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Authors:

Black Physicians of Canada - Médecins Noirs Du Canada

Black Physicians' Association of Ontario - Association Canadienne des Médecins Noirs De L'Ontario

The Black Medical Students' Association of Canada - Association Canadienne des Étudiants Noirs en Médecine

To:

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.

Prime Minister of Canada

Office of the Prime Minister

80 Wellington Street

Ottawa, Ontario

K1A 0A2

Copies to:

The Honourable Mark Miller, P.C., M.P., Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P., Minister of International Development

Subject: Standing in Solidarity with Sudan - Urgent Call for Action

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Miller and Minister Hussen,

Since April 15, a merciless conflict between warring military factions has held the nation of Sudan, with its nearly 46 million people, hostage [1]. As a direct result of this senseless violence, over 1.4 million individuals have been displaced and countless others have lost their lives at the time of writing [2].

As physicians, we are deeply concerned over the ongoing conflict in Sudan and the profound suffering and loss of life it has caused. The collapse of Sudan's healthcare system under the weight of this crisis is an abhorrent tragedy which demands immediate attention. According to the World Health Organization, nearly two-thirds of



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hospitals in active conflict zones are currently not operating [3]. The few remaining facilities struggling to still function are faced with critical shortages of essential medications and supplies. In one Darfur hospital, six newborns tragically died within a week due to power outages and lack of oxygen [4]. Over 200,000 pregnant people have had their vital prenatal care interrupted. Their anguish is only compounded by the terrifying decision to either traverse active conflict zones in an attempt to reach the limited number of functioning maternity wards or deliver at home in a country already burdened with high maternal mortality rates [5].

In addition to the acute issues faced by pregnant individuals, those with chronic diseases are also grappling with potentially life-threatening challenges. An example of this is the critical shortage of tacrolimus, a vital medication for transplant recipients, which has left approximately 12,000 individuals at risk of organ rejection. Moreover, for those who are awaiting a transplant, their ordeal has only worsened as the conflict has interrupted dialysis treatments for over a hundred thousand patients [6].

In the face of these tragedies, we are filled with admiration for our courageous colleagues in Sudan who continue to demonstrate unwavering dedication to their patients in the face of unimaginable horror. Countless physicians and nurses have remained in hospital for several consecutive days in order to care for the endless stream of injured civilians. Their selflessness and resilience is nothing short of awe-inspiring. We commend obstetrician Dr. Huwaida al-Hassan, her two daughters, and the rest of her team as they have bravely cared for both obstetrical and trauma patients during active shelling in the city [7]. Regrettably, we also mourn the loss of Dr. Bushra Ibnauf Sulieman, a Sudanese-American gastroenterologist, professor, and humanitarian who regularly brought medical supplies to Sudan and taught thousands of Sudanese medical students. He postponed his own evacuation to ensure his father could access dialysis treatment at one of the few operating clinics and was killed during the conflict [8].

It is an absolute travesty that such immense human suffering continues to persist. However, international humanitarian efforts have been successfully mobilized in the past in response to mass crises as recently exemplified by the coordinated aid and immediate resettlement of Ukrainian refugees. We have the opportunity to draw on the policies and lessons learned from this and apply them within the Sudanese context.



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Currently, the international response to the tragedies unfolding in Sudan have been at worst woefully insufficient, and at best, protracted and reluctant. Given this situation, we urgently call on Canadian healthcare workers to stand in solidarity with the people of Sudan. We implore the Government of Canada to provide support to the Sudanese-Canadian community by establishing expedited resettlement pathways for refugees and internally displaced individuals. It is paramount for the international community and the Canadian government to significantly increase critical humanitarian aid, placing a particular emphasis on medical assistance. Let us remain unwavering in our commitment to humanity and resolutely pursue justice, compassion, and solidarity for all.

Sincerely,

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Black Physicians' Association of Ontario - Association Canadienne des Médecins Noirs De L'Ontario

The Black Medical Students' Association of Canada - Association Canadienne des Étudiants Noirs en Médecine

List of organizations that support this letter:

1. Black Physicians' Association of Alberta (BPAA)
2. Indigenous Physicians' Association of Canada (IPAC)
3. The Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC)
4. The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CCFP)
5. The Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS)
6. The Canadian Medical Association (CMA)
7. Sudan Doctors Union- Canada (SDU-Ca)



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